DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 246 487 CS 504 554

AUTHOR Hample, Dale; Dallinger, Judith M.
TITLE Argument-As-Procedure and "The Art of Controversy."
PUB DATE Feb 84
NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Speech Communication Association (Seattle, WA, February 18-21, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communication (Thought Transfer); *Critical Thinking; *Discourse Analysis; *Logical Thinking; *Persuasive Discourse; *Philosophy; Rhetoric; Speech Communication
IDENTIFIERS *Controversy; *Schopenhauer (Arthur)

ABSTRACT

Scholars have long been interested in the relation between rhetoric and dialectic. Recent theorists suggest that one way of viewing argument is through the perspective of argument-as-procedure, in which rules such as those attendant to the conduct of dialectic, debate, or discussion come under the purview of argumentation. This paper is a critical study of that idea, and uses Schopenhauer's little known essay "The Art of Controversy" as a text because of its realistic and slightly ironic approach to philosophical discussion. The body of the essay is several dozen strategems that Schopenhauer recommends to dialecticians, especially those who find themselves on the wrong end of an argument. In understanding "The Art of Controversy," more informed decisions can be made on several issues. Once the normal features of marketplace argumentation are accounted for, does anything distinctive still inhere in philosophical argument? Or, do the formal and informal rules of dialectic, debate and discussion restrain or change the nature of argument? These questions promote a return to the initial idea of argument-as-procedure. If procedure still seems attractive after Schopenhauer, it is possible to be confident of the perspective's value. (CRH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED246487

ARGUMENT-AS-PROCEDURE AND "THE ART OF CONTROVERSY"

by

Dale Hample

and

Judith M. Dallinger

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Dale Hample

Judith M. Dallinger

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Paper presented to the Western Speech Communication Association

Seattle, Washington

February 1984

CS 554

ARGUMENT-AS-PROCEDURE AND "THE ART OF CONTROVERSY"

Scholars have long been interested in the relation between rhetoric and dialectic. Recently, Wenzel and Brockriede have suggested that one way of viewing argument is through the perspective of argument-as-procedure.[1] Through this procedural perspective, rules such as those attendant to the conduct of dialectic, debate or discussion come under the purview of augumentation. Argument-as-procedure is the central topic of this essay, and is considered to be problematic for the purposes of this investigation.

This paper is intended as a critical study of that idea. It takes as a text for explication Schopenhauer's "The Art of Controversy". This little-known essay was published posthumously, and is rarely mentioned by either Schopenhauer scholars or rhetoricians.[2] In fact, it is not an especially profound paper. What distinguishes it is its realistic--indeed, perhaps even ironical--approach to philosophical discussion. The main body of the essay is several dozen "strategems" or "tricks" which Schopenhauer recommends to dialecticians, especially those who find themselves on the wrong end of an argument.[3]

Schopenhauer's discussion provides a useful overlay to our usual, almost worshipful, understanding of philosophical exchanges. Having dosed ourselves with "The Art of Controversy", we may come to clearer-eyed decisions on several questions. For instance, once we have accounted for the normal features of marketplace argumentation, does anything distinctive still inhere in philosophical argument? Or, alternatively, do the formal and informal rules of dialectic, debate and discussion restrain or change the nature of argument? In this way, we will have returned to the initial idea of argument-as-procedure prepared to evaluate it critically. If procedure still seems attractive after Schopenhauer, we may be confident of the perspective's value.

The paper begins with summaries of the procedural perspective on argument, and of "The Art of Controversy." We will then move to a discussion of dialectic and eristic, which should refine our concepts a bit and prepare us for the final section of the paper, which re-evaluates argument-as-procedure.

Argument-as-Procedure

The procedural perspective has been described most thoroughly in two recent papers by Wenzel.[4] His object is to distinguish the main ways a critic may examine an argument. One may take a rhetorical perspective, asking questions about effectiveness. Or the criticism may be a logical one; here, validity and rationality are the central issues. The last perspective is the dialectical one.[5]

When considering the question, "how well does this argument incarnate the requirements of dialectic?" the scholar will be applying different standards to a perceptually different phenomenon than when making logical or rhetorical criticisms. To make logical judgements - which may be based on any kind of formal or informal theories of logic - the critic examines a text. He/she treats the text as a static product, and abstracts certain features of form from it. Rhetorical judgements, on the other hand, are about effectiveness. Therefore, the critic must consider the relationship between rhetor and auditor. A solely textual analysis would be inappropriate, and the critic must needs see the argument as a process, as a transaction between social actors. The procedural perspective is different still. Here the scholar insists that the argument be seen "as disciplined method of discourse for the critical testing of ideas."[6] The focus is on methodology, abstracted in a sense from content and social constraints. Participants are supposed to be motivated by cooperation and a mutual desire for clear understanding;

the argument should be conducted with perfect candor, and ought not be influenced by the arguers' personalities. "The dialectical perspective construes argumentation as a methodology for bringing the natural, unreflected processes of arguing under some sort of deliberate control."[7] Wenzel goes so far as to insist that the arguers will have both explicit procedural agreements, and explicit self-consciousness as dialecticians.[8]

Though Wenzel takes pains to emphasize that the three perspectives can merge or blur in a given criticism, and that a full understanding of argument requires "an eventual synthesis," he still feels that the procedural point of view has a special eminence: "I suspect that the dialectical perspective may deserve the central place in a conceptualization of argument, for it is only within the framework of a dialectical encounter that the resources of rhetorical appeal and logical rigor are combined for the critical testing of theses."[9] Thus does Wenzel champion dialectic as rationality's trial.

Several comments may help clarify elements of Wenzel's theory, and emphasize features important to this essay. First of all, Wenzel is not saying that there are three kinds of argument - only that there are three stances the critic may take: "I am not concerned here with the phenomena, per se, but with ways of looking at them...."[10] So whether or not an instance of human discourse has ever met Wenzel's requirements for dialectic is not important to the theory. Just as taking the logical perspective does not presume that all (or any) argument is fully logical, taking the procedural perspective does not amount to an insistence that an argument is truly dialectical. As a matter of fact, Wenzel seems unsure whether pure dialectic is even possible: in one place he says that "the material conditions for that ideal may never be realized," and in another, that "we seldom find dialectic in the pure state."[11] We must remember, therefore, that Wenzel is describing a set of standards, not

a pattern of real human behavior. There will be a certain tension, therefore, between the idealism of Wenzel's standards and the reality of marketplace arguing in any critical use of this perspective. Perhaps this idealism is most sharply seen when juxtaposed to a more tactical description of dialectic.

"The Art of Controversy"

Schopenhauer's essay will certainly give us that contrast. His list of strategems has a horrible charm about it.[12] Various of his tricks are: enraging the opponent, hiding one's conclusion, claiming to have proved things which were not in fact proved, being strategically irrelevant, using biasing terms, orating bombastically, and so forth. The whole list is in the Appendix Some of the strategems (perhaps turning the tables or pursuing evaded arguments) are probably legitimate, even in Wenzel's ideal dialectic, but these are surely in the minority. Schopenhauer makes a pretense of claimimg that he is only trying to alert dialecticians to the possible derangements an unscrupulous opponent may attempt, but in fact he only gives explicit instructions about self-defense for strategems 1, 2, 3, 23, 25, 30, 31 and 38.

Probably no one will dispute that Schopenhauer and Wenzel are plainly different. But is it fair to place them side by side at all? Surely Schopenhauer cannot be describing the same thing as Wenzel.

In fact, Schopenhauer maintains that he <u>is</u> writing about dialectic, and the reasons for that belief provide further contrast to Wenzel's view. Dialectic, says Schopenhauer, needs to be studied inductively, by observing the experience of disputants[13] and is the "original and natural dialectic innate in men...they strive for nothing but victory."[14] Human nature, not the <u>logos</u>, controls the dialogue.[15] Schopenhauer objects to Aristotle's distinctions among various kinds of dialogue[16] because the classification

is based in part on knowing whether or not the premises are true. How could we ever know this, wonders Schopenhauer, especially at the beginning of a discussion? Dialectic and eristic are only differently colored words for the same thing.[17]

Several elements of human nature are important to Schopenhauer's position. The first is our "natural obstinacy." If two people are discussing an important point, and A discovers that B holds a divergent opinion, A "does not begin by revising his own process of thinking, so as to discover any mistake which he may have made, but he assumes that the mistake has occurred in B's."[18] Thus, A will naturally press B and defend himself/herself. Notice that this is essential to dialectic: without "natural obstinacy," no "critical testing of theses" would occur. If dialecticians had only the cooperative motives described by Wenzel and Ehninger, dialogues would be a polite morass of concession. Now Wenzel and Ehninger do not say that cooperative impulses will be the only ones, but particularly in Wenzel's theory, we read little about the essential humanness of the dialecticians.[19]

That we are stubborn is fortunate, because we are also unreliable in our judgement. Our obstinacy gives us time to think, and creates a natural conservatism which compensates for our possible inability to think quickly and clearly enough: "if I were to abandon the position on which I had previously betowed much thought, as soon as it appeared that [my opponent] was right, it might easily happen that I might be misled by a momentary impression, and give up the truth in order to accept an error."[20] More sensible is an instrictive resistance, conveyed in an aggressive attitude toward the dialectic, even if one has momentarily lost faith.

> [T]his very dishonesty, this persistence in a proposition which seems false even to ourselves, has something to be said for it.

> It often happens that we begin in the firm conviction of the truth of our statement; but our opponent's argument appears to refute it. Should we abandon our position at once, we may discover later on that we were right after all; the proof we offered was false, but nevertheless there was a proof for our statement which was true. The argument which would have been our salvation did not occur to us at the moment. Hence we make it a rule to attack a counter-argument, even though to all appearances it is true and forcible, in the belief that its truth is only superficial, and that in the course of the dispute another argument will occur to us by which we may upset it, or succeed in confirming the truth of our statement. In this way we are almost compelled to become dishonest; or, at any rate, the temptation to do so is very great. Thus it is that the weakness of our intellect and the perversity of our will lend each other mutual support; and that, generally, a disputant fights not for truth, but for his proposition... [21]

For Schopenhauer, dialectic is neither epistemologically nor procedurally sacred. He expresses this with a happy metaphor which recalls Aristotle's justifications for rhetoric: "Dialectic, then, need have nothing to do with truth, as little as the fencing master considers who is in the right when a dispute leads to a duel. Thrust and parry is the whole business."[22] Needless to say, Wenzel thinks differently of the whole business, and would abhor Schopenhauer's definition of dialectic as "the act of getting the best of it in a dispute." Being right helps, of course, "but this in itself is not enough in the existing disposition of mankind, and, on the other hand, with the weakness of the human intellect, it is not altogether necessary."[23]

So Wenzel's telos turns out to be "not altogether necessary" for Schopenhauer.

But although our object in this essay is to re-evaluate argument-as-procedure from the standpoint of "The Art of Controversy," we must restrain ourselves for a few pages more. Even though Schopenhauer claims to be writing about dialectic, the differences between him and Wenzel are so dramatic that we need to form our own judgements about the fairness of the comparison. To do that, we need to know a little more about dialectic, and our testimony should obviously come from some new authorities.

Dialetic and Eristic

Plato, Socrates and others practiced dialectic, but Aristotle was the first to formulate rules for it.[24] Dialogue had been previously taught by sophists, who gave their students whole arguments, but they offered no general rules. Aristotle is proud to be describing an act to his own students, rather than merely passing out the art's products as the teachers of contention did. Aristotle himself must have learned dialectic in the old way, however. In Plato's school, dialogues were held repeatedly on the same topics.[25] People took notes, and improved the old arguments for the next discussion. Since students switched sides continually, the dialectical arguments were communally developed. So Aristotle observed and participated in dialectic which was serving several purposes at once: students were searching for truth, learning to argue, exercising and exploring various philosophical positions. In those early days, then, dialectic had several functions, and the participants were perhaps less like committed philosophers than intercollegiate debaters. From the beginning, the practice of dialectic was partly rhetorical.

We can see this, as Aristotle must have, in Plato's writings. The early dialogues prominently feature elenchus - cross-examination of refutation. In Socrates' hands, this is a deadly weapon.[26] Socrates himself rarely takes a position; instead he leads his interlocutor into self-critique.[27] But

in doing so, Socrates is cunning, not disinterested. Often he is insincere: he claims to be objective, to lack a position of his own, to have a memory so poor he cannot recall a point. He says that he has no idea where his questions will lead, that the argument will follow its own course and that it is not under his control. He even says, in seeming fairness, that he will answer questions, too. In our modern efforts to reconcile all our beliefs about Socrates, we have decided upon the charitable lable "Socratic irony" for all this. Nor were the Greeks naive:

> So then, Thrasymachus, said I [Socrates], my manner of argument seem to you pettifogging?
>
> It does, he said.
>
> You think, do you, that it was with malice aforethought and trying to get the better of you unfairly that I asked that question?
>
> I don't think it, I know it, he said, and you won't make anything by it, for you won't get the better of me by stealth and, failing stealth, you are not of the force to beat me in debate.
>
> Bless your soul, said I, I wouldn't even attempt such a thing.[28]

Robinson summarizes Socrates' behavior: "The picture which we have so far obtained of the Socratic elenchus is by no means a favorable one. This elenchus involved persistent hypocrisy; it showed a negative and destructive spirit; it caused pain to its victims; it thereby made them enemies of Socrates...."[29] Later on, Plato altered this elenchus, and moved to a dialectic in which everyone was more open about the questioner and respondent roles; the negative elenchus begins to take a lesser place, and the dialogues are more constructive.[30]

Aristotle saw or read all of this, and felt that more than one sort of dialogue is possible. In the Topics, he classifies four kinds of reasoning:

demonstrative, in which the premises are certainly true; dialectical, in which the premises are generally accepted by everyone, or by all or the best or the most philosophers; contentious, in which the premises falsely seem to be dialectical ones, or in which the reasoning is fallacious; and mis-reasonings, in which the premises falsely seem to be demonstrative ones.[31] Dialectical and contentions (erisitc) are the most important categories for us, since these would seem to correspond to the kinds of argumentation sought by Wenzel (in the first case) and described by Schopenhauer (in the second). Notice that, as Schopenhauer saw, the distinction depends partly on being able to evaluate the premises.

A second set of distinctions is given in the Sophistical Refutations. The four kinds of dialogic argument are these: diadactic, which uses principles, not opinions, as premises; dialectical, which operates from generally accepted premises; examination, which the teacher uses, moving from generally accepted premises which the student should know; and contentious, in which a person reasons or appears to reason from premises which appear to be generally accepted, but are not.[32] We have essentially the same distinctions between dialectic and eristic as before: only dialectic's premises are always proper, and eristic's method may be invalid.

These categories seem to have the straightforward clarity of most of Aristotle's taxonomies. The Topics is about dialectic, and gives instruction in dialectical reasoning. The middle six books spell out rules for dealing with predications of accident, value, genus, definition, and so forth. These are both dry and dialectical, and pose no problems. But the eighth book is different.

There Aristotle explains not the inventional theory of topics, but how to conduct oneself in actual dialectic. Perhaps he had in mind what he saw

in the Academy; certainly he considered dialectic to be a teaching tool as well as a method of philosophical inquiry.[33] At several points, the reader is sure that Aristotle is describing a competitive contest, not the cooperative dialogue Ehninger wrote about.[34] Some of Aristotle's advice in the rest could have been: premises should be adapted to the interlocutor's beliefs.[35] The selection of argument forms - and the use of reductio in particular - should depend on the opponent's level of skill.[36] The dialectician may use delaying tactics, since the exercise may have a time limit.[37] Questions should be answered in such a way as to preserve observers' regard for the respondent.[38] Premises should be dispersed, to disguise the argument's structure.[39] One ought to avoid offering one's premises explicitly; instead, "one should soar as far aloof from them as possible."[40]

What are these tricks doing in a treatise on dialectic? Certainly Aristotle knew that these strategems are not aboveboard. He says that concealing the grounds of an argument is wrong, for instance and objects to the "dishonesty in putting questions" which occurs in eristic.[41] His own practice seems to have been entirely fair, and not contentious at all.[42] But even in his description of the aims of eristic, we can detect a certain ambivalence. The goals are: to refute the other, to show that the other is committing a fallacy, to lead the other into paradix, to reduce the other to ungrammatical speech, and to cause the other to babble.[43] The seeds of "The Art of Controversy" are apparent here, but so are some ligitimate features of philosophical argumentation. Eristic, it seems, does not necessarily require unfair fighting, just as dialectic is not always pure.

Our explanation for the similarities between dialectic and eristic is modeled on the following passage, which discusses the various premises used in a dialectic: "Those [premises] which are used to conceal the conclusion

serve a controversial purpose only; but inasmuch as an undertaking of this sort is always conducted against another person, we are obliged to employ them as well."[44] Dialetic partakes of the world, and its audience and participants are rationally imperfect. Dialectic is immanently rhetorical and persuasive;[45] it is done through people. Even in the service of truth, artifice may be needed. Perelman says that Artstotle's distinction between eristic and dialectic "constitutes but an ideal formulation of aims inextricably interwoven, with varying intensity, in actual debates, where the interlocutors endeavor, to be sure, to make their theses prevail but, as often as not, also believe that thesis to be free from contradiction and the one most consistent with the truth."[46] Aristotle's treatises were designed to fill two needs: to give a philosophical grounding to dialectic's inventional requirements, and to explain how to do dialectic. Thinking of arguments is a very different enterprise than delivering them, and the mundane realities of the latter task will often threaten the purity of the former.[47]

In principle, then, the distinction between dialectic and eristic is sharp. Dialectic has better premises, better method, and better attitudes toward truth, the interlocutor and the audience, But once translated to the practical plane, everything begins to blur, until only the extremes are clearly apart. Having arrived at this point, we are finally ready to return to Wenzel, and to say what Schopenhauer has to do with argument-as-procedure.

Arguement-as-Procedure, Once Again

We could exaggerate the differences between Wenzel and Schopenhauer by saying that Wenzel is describing an ideal and Schopenhauer is summarizing the results of an induction. As stated, however, this contrast is too sharp. Schopenhauer makes some theoretical arguments to prove that dialectic should be combative. And Wenzel is describing a critical perspective, so he surely

expects something like dialectic to be available for criticizing. Since we already have a fairly good idea what Schopenhauer thinks dialectic looks like in practice, let us concentrate for a moment on what it looks like to Wenzel.

We will proceed classically, by the method of residues. Start, if you will, with an example of serious dialogue in mind: one of Plato's dialogues, perhaps, or a discussion between two scholars about some disputable point. Subtract first any deceptive tricks or personal failings: if any faults of memory or personality occur in our example, we will ignore them and repair the damage. Next, take away the logical structure of the argumentation. Of course, Wenzel does not propose that dialectic has no logic, but we are trying here to see what is unique to Wenzel's dialectic, and he assures us that the logical perspective is a distinct one. By the same reasoning, we must filter out the rhetorical adaptations which personalize the discourse and make it effective for its particular audience. In this way, we change the real participants into incarnations of the universal audience, and change their words into some theoretically neutral bloodless prose. Lastly, we need to remove elements common to all kinds of discourse, whether dialectical, erisitc or rhetorical. These few remaining features include the specific topic and the substantive arguments themselves. Is anything left?

Wenzel only intends that the procedural skeleton remain, and that it have a particular kind of form. Its central object is free consensus, and its features are those which protect that possibility. Symmetry, civility and an unbiased critical sense should yield a substantively unsecured investigative dialogue.[48] None of this, as far as we can see, is properly the province of eristic, logic, rhetoric or all three. And, in fact, none of it is even possible until the kind of subtractions we have mentioned are done. So procedure survives our test.

The emergent theme of this essay has been the tension within the philosophical pair, real/ideal. Finally the time has come to discuss these two values explicitly. Wenzel's papers, as he indicates, do not describe real arguments. They are about abstractions - residues from different patterns of subtraction - and therefore describe ideals of argument. A good argument in the logical sense in valid, in the rhetorical sense in persuasive, and in the dialectical sense is unrestrained but fair. This idealization is not the opposite of induction. As we have illustrated, the ideals can be seen as the residues of actual argumentations.[49] The dialectical features of argumentation are no more abstract than the rhetorical and logical features, since none of these normally occurs in explicit self-conscious form in argumentation. So Wenzel's essays are a purification of argument, rather as a centrifuge functions in a chemistry laboratory.

What, then, of Schopenhauer and Aristotle? The distinctive thing about Schopenhauer's essay is that he subtracted less. "The Art of Controversy" turns out not to be a corrective or a refutation of Wenzel, but an earlier stage in the purification. Schopenhauer's theory and his list of strategems are founded on his view of human nature - that people are obstinate and not perfectly rational. Precisely this sort of thing is barred from the procedural realm by Wenzel, who has relegated all this to rhetoric, the only one of his perspectives which involves people. Aristotle, too, conflates dialectic and rhetoric in book VIII of the Topics, with results similar to Schopenhauer's. Wenzel's view of dialectic is different from these because theirs is less pure; given that, we find no other essential difference between the three descriptions.

Conclusion

This paper has been an attempt at an experiment in criticism. Wenzel's conception of argument-as-procedure constututed the hypothesis to be tested, and Schopenhauer and Aristotle provided the criteria or data to use as a standard for decision. Upon analysis of the data, we found nothing to dispute Wenzel's position, and therefore offer this essay as further support for it. This odd way of summarizing our results will not, we hope, obscure our feeling that the dialectical point of view is a legitimate and potentially important one for the critical analyses of arguments.

Appendix: Schopenhauer's Strategems

1. Extension. Exaggerate your opponent's position beyond its intended limits, and attack it in that form.
2. Homonymy. Use the sound of a word: either use a homonym in a proposition which you can refute in that form, or use another meaning of the word your opponent uses.
3. Absolutism. Take something your opponent meant relatively, regard it as absolute, and refute it in that form.
4. Hidden Conclusion. Disperse your premises throughout the discourse, so that your opponent cannot perceive your aim.
5. Ex Concessis. Take premises you know to be false, but which have been conceeded by your opponent, and form your argument from them.
6. Question Begging. Postulate the conclusion in a disguised form: use another term for a key word, make a general assumption for which your conclusion is an instance, postulate something which immediately implies your conclusion, or induce your opponent to admit all the particulars of which your conclusion is the generalization.
7. Socratic Method. Ask broad questions very quickly, so that your opponent is unable to anticipate you or detect your direction.
8. Enraging Your Opponent. Do your opponent injustice, or be insolent.
9. Confusing Premise Order. Introduce your premises out of their logical order.
10. Nullifying Response Sets. If your opponent, for instance, always denies whatever you put forth, offer your premises in a negated form so that your opponent's denial will yield what you want.
11. Assume Your Conclusion. If your opponent admits the particulars of your induction, don't then ask for confirmation of your conclusion. Instead, go on as though the conclusion had been granted, and everyone will assume that the conclusion was in fact given to you.

12. Pejorative Description. Use names, metaphors, labels, and so forth, which make your side sound better.

13. Contrasting Alternatives. Offer your opponent a choice between two propositions, one yours and one extreme. This makes your position look moderate and probable.

14. Claiming Victory. After obtaining a number of irrelevant responses, announce your conclusion is proved.

15. Irrelevant Probes. Put forth a true but subtle proposition which doesn't quite bear on your conclusion. If your opponent rejects it, embarrass him. If he/she accepts it, try to use it as a proof of some kind, possibly moving to strategem 14.

16. Ad Hominem or Ex Concessis. Use your opponent's claims or general philosophical posture, and try to find an inconsistency (real or apparent) between these and his/her other assertions.

17. Subtle Distinction. When confronted with a good objection from your opponent, make up a distinction to escape the counter-proof.

18. Anticipatory Interruption. If you foresee your opponent's conclusion, you must somehow sidetrack the line of reasoning.

19. Over-Generalization. If you cannot refute the specifics of your opponent's proposition, generalize it and refute the generalization.

20. Unilateral Concluding. Draw your own conclusions, rather than giving your opponent an opportunity at that point in the discourse. This is possible even if you are still missing a premise.

21. Counter-Sophistries. If you see through your opponent's sophistry, refute it in kind, as this is usually more effective than exposing it.

22. Accusation of Question-Begging. If you are asked to accept a proposition which obviously implies your opponent's conclusion, refuse on the grounds of question-begging.

23. Stimulate Exaggeration. Harrass your opponent by contradicting, by being contentious, and so forth, so that he/she become imprudent and exaggerates

his/her position. Then refute the exaggerations.

24. Diversion (False Syllogism). Take your opponent's premises and put them into false syllogisms, drawing absurd conclusions. This makes the premises seem wrong.

25. Diversion (Contrary Instance). Use one example to refute a universal proposition.

26. Turning the Tables. Use one of your opponent's premises to draw the opposite conclusion.

27. Encourage Anger. If your opponent loses his/her temper at some point in your argument, pursue that point--partly to stimulate more anger, partly because the anger makes your argument look stronger.

28. Ad Auditores. If your opponent is expert and your audience is not, put forth a claim that the expert must go into tedious detail to refute. You will find it easy to ridicule him/her for being punctilious.

29. Diversion. Go off on an irrelevant tangent, and pretend that it is pertinent.

30. Ad Verecundiam. Appeal to authority, thus bypassing the responsibility of giving reasons. Your opponent will accept authorities in inverse ratio to his/her own expertise. You may quote authorities out of context, or falsify completely. Citing the general opinion is very effective.

31. Feigned Incompetence. If you have no answer to a good argument, claim that you cannot understand it. If you have more prestige than your opponent, the clear implication will be that the argument is nonsense.

32. Pejorative Classification. Instead of refuting your opponent's position, declare it to be, for instance, Rationalism, which by implication is hopelessly indefensible.

33. Pragmatism. Admit that your opponent's argument may hold "in theory," but say that it won't work in practice.

34. Pursuing Evaded Arguments. If your opponent tries to evade a line of argument, press it all the more in the hope that you have found a weakness in your opponent's position.

35. Ab Utili. Harness the self-interest of your opponent or your audience. Show that if your opponent's argument were true, it would harm him/her or your audience. The argument is very likely to be dropped or rejected, regardless of its truth.

36. Bombast. Say little or nothing, but say it impressively. This will intimidate many opponents.

37. Refute Bad Arguments. If you have refuted your opponent's supporting arguments, claim that his/her conclusion must also necessarily be false.

38. Ad Personam. Be rude and insulting once you see that you are going to lose. Attack your opponent's character and leave the topic altogether.

Footnotes

[1]Joseph W. Wenzel, "Jurgen Habermas and the Dialectical Perspective on Argumentation," Journal of the American Forensic Association, 16 (1979), 83-94; Joseph W. Wenzel, "Perspectives on Argument," in Proceedings of the Summer Conference on Argumentation, ed. Jack Rhodes and Sara Newell (Alta, Utah: Speech Communication Association, 1980), pp. 112-133; Wayne Brockriede, "Argument as Epistemological Method," in Argumentation as a Way of Knowing, ed. David A. Thomas (Falls Church, Va.: Speech Communication Association, 1980), pp. 128-134. An important forerunner of these papers is Douglas Ehninger, "Argument as Method: Its Nature, Its Limitations and Its Uses," Speech Monographs, 37 (1970), 101-110.

[2]Arthur Schopenhauer, "The Art of Controversy," in The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer, trans. T. Bailey Saunders (New York: Willey, nd). Schopenhauer's essay is briefly mentioned in Michael Osborne, "The Abuses of Argument," Southern Speech Communication Journal, 49 (1983), 2, but such notice is rare.

[3]These are listed in summary form in the Appendix. Many of the titles are ours. The conceptual overlaps noticeable there are present in the essay as well.

[4]Wenzel, "Habermas;" Wenzel, "Perspectives."

[5]These three perspectives have these corresponding views of argument: argument as a product (logical), argument as a process (rhetorical), and argument as a procedure (dialectical). Wenzel uses these pairs of terms more or less interchangeably in labeling the three perspectives. For an explict equivalence of "procedural" and "dialectical" perspectives, see Wenzel, "Habermas," 84.

[6]Wenzel, "Perspectives," p. 116.

[7]Wenzel, "Habermas," 84.

[8]Wenzel, "Perspectives," p. 115, refers to "deliberate control" of the argument, and continues: "The participants are understood . . . as self-conscious advocates. . . . The element of cooperation is revealed most clearly in their

overt agreement on rules of procedure." This does not seem entirely realistic, but the idealism of Wenzel's description of dialectic will turn out to be an important issue in understanding his position.

[9]Wenzel, "Perspectives," pp. 116, 130.

[10]Wenzel, "Perspectives," p. 113. Also see the physiological analogy on p. 116.

[11]Wenzel, "Habermas," 94, 84. On p. 92, Wenzel offers a comparison to Perelman's notion of the universal audience; this comparison recurs in Wenzel, "Perspectives," pp. 123-125. See Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969). p. 37.

[12]Schopenhauer's translator remarks that the essay may be ironical. We have chosen to ignore this possibility, and have several reasons for doing so: (1) The initial portion of the essay is learned and carefully reasoned; no one could reasonably call it anything but philosophical. (2) That preface yields a coherent and serious rationale for a "no holds barred" approach to dialogue. (3) Much of what Schopenhauer says, and even the occasional uncertainty about whether he could be serious in recommending a particular gambit, is exactly paralleled in Aristotle, as we shall see. (4) Schopenhauer's essay is a provoking text if read seriously, and so we are entitled to do so. Remember that our object is to illumine argumentation, not Schopenhauer's corpus.

[13]Schopenhauer, pp. 2-3.

[14]Schopenhauer, p. 10.

[15]Contrast Schopenhauer with Plato, Protagoras, trans. W. K. C. Guthrie, in Plato: The Collected Dialogues, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), 333C: "It is the argument itself that I wish to probe, though it may turn out that both I who question and you who answer are equally under scrutiny." Wenzel would be sympathetic to what Socrates says he is doing; Schopenhauer would be intrigued that this passage persuades Protagoras to defend a view he doesn't hold.

[16]Aristotle, Topics, trans. W. A. Pickard-Cambridge, in The Works of Aristotle, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), vol. 1, I.1, 100a25-101a17. We will discuss these shortly.

[17]Schopenhauer, p. 3. Richard Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic, 2d. edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 70, believes that Plato used "dialectic" to describe dialogue he approved, "eristic" and "sophistic" for dialogue he didn't like, and that this is the only real distinction to be found in the dialogues.

[18]Schopenhauer, p. 3.

[19]Wenzel, "Habermas," 84, says that ideal dialectic "transcends the mundane world of social action, [and] suspends the constraints of situated social reality. . . ." Elsewhere (Wenzel, "Perspectives," p. 125) he remarks that "The dialectical interlocutor may thus be construed as a particular person 'straining' for universality." Ehninger's, 104, idea of a "posture of restrained partisanship" seems more realistic, but it is hard to tell if that attitude would satisfy Wenzel's requirements.

[20]Schopenhauer, p. 6, n. 1.

[21]Schopenhauer, p. 5.

[22]Schopenhauer, p. 10.

[23]Schopenhauer, p. 8, n. 3.

[24]Aristotle, Topics, VIII.5, 159a25-33; Aristotle, On Sophistical Refutations, trans. W. A. Pickard-Cambridge, in Works, vol. 1, XXXIV, 183b34-184b9.

[25]This description is from Ryle, who, incidentally, supports Aristotle's claim to be the first codifier. Gilbert Ryle, "Dialectic in the Academy," in Aristotle on Dialectic: The Topics, ed. G. E. L. Owen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 69-79.

[26]Perhaps literally so. Socrates' interlocutors did not always appreciate him. Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, trans. R. D. Hicks

(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938), II, 21, citing Demetrius of Byzantium as his source, reports that "owing to his vehemence in argument, men set upon him with their fists or tore his hair out; and that for the most part he was despised and laughed at. . . ." This account is consistent with Socrates' own narrative in Plato, Apology, trans. Hugh Tredennick, in Collected Dialogues, 21C-23A.

[27]This description of Socrates' elenchus is taken from Robinson, esp. ch. 2.

[28]Plato, Republic, trans. Paul Shorey, in Collected Dialogues, I, 341A-B.

[29]Robinson, p. 10.

[30]Robinson, pp. 19, 61.

[31]Aristotle, Topics, I.1, 100a25-101a17.

[32]Aristotle, Sophistical Refutations, II, 165a34-165b9. See Otto Bird, "The Topics and the Art of Teaching by Discussion," Paideia: Special Aristotle Issue, nv (1978), 196-201, for a treatment of these types of discussion. A set of distinctions different from both this one and the one in the Topics is in Diogenes Laertius, Lives, III, 49-51, but this passage is not very well developed.

[33]Aristotle, Topics, I.2, 101a25-101b4.

[34]For instance: if the premises, "though false, be generally accepted, the argument is dialectical, whereas if, though true, they be generally rejected, it is bad. . ." (Topics, VIII.12, 162b28-29). What appear to be artificial rules for evaluation appear elsewhere, too: Should an interlocutor admit a premise? "[I]n serious inquiry he ought not to grant it, unless he be more sure about it than about the conclusion; whereas in a dialectical exercise he may do so if he is merely satisfied of its truth" (Topics, VIII.3, 159a2-14). Aristotle clearly envisioned that participants would take positions they did not believe in (Topics, VIII.5, 159b27-35; VIII.14, 163a29-163b3).

Eleonore Stump, "Dialectic in Ancient and Medieval Logic" in her edition of Boethius's De Topicis Differentiis (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press,

1978), pp. 163-164, reviews the evidence bearing on whether or not these dialectics were judged by a non-participant, and concludes that they probably were not. Boethius, IV, 1206C308, insists that the presence of a judge is a distinguishing feature of rhetoric, and its absence, of dialectic. Even so, Aristotle's dialecticians would seem to have standards other than truth in mind. Ch. Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 166, agrees with Boethius' judgment.

[35]Aristotle, Topics, VIII.1, 155b7-14; cf. I.14, 105b30-31.

[36]Aristotle, Topics, VIII.2, 157b34-158a2.

[37]Aristotle, Topics, VIII.10, 161a9-12. Cf. Sophistical Refutations, XXXIV, 183a23-26. This seems to be a change from Plato, whose dialogues could go on indefinitely; see Steven Rendall, "Dialogue, Philosophy, and Rhetoric: The Example of Plato's Gorgias," Philosophy and Rhetoric, 10 (1977), 172.

[38]Aristotle, Topics, VIII.8-9.

[39]Aristotle, Topics, VIII.1, 155b20-156a26.

[40]Aristotle, Topics, VIII.1, 155b29; cf. 156a27-156b3.

[41]Aristotle, Topics, VIII.11, 162a24-34; Sophistical Refutations, XVI, 175a20.

[42]G. E. L. Owen, "Dialectic and Eristic in the Treatment of the Forms," in Aristotle on Dialectic, pp. 107-125.

[43]Aristotle, Sophistical Refutations, III. But: "or it [the purpose] is to produce the appearance of each of these things without the reality."

[44]Aristotle, Topics, VIII.1, 155b22.

[45]See Rendall, 169.

[46]Perelman, p. 165.

[47]This whole discussion renews our admiration for Ehninger's elegant summary of the requirements for dialectic: "restrained partisanship." This attempt to

balance the demands of dialectic and eristic is exactly parallel, we think, to what Aristotle did. Ehninger's phrase shows immediately the vulnerability of dialectic to eristic.

[48]In addition to Wenzel's papers, Brant R. Burleson and Susan L. Kline, "Habermas' Theory of Communication: A Critical Explication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 65 (1979), 412-428, provide a discussion of Habermas' ideal speech situation which is helpful in understanding what Wenzel wants these procedures to be.

[49]We do not mean to imply that this was Wenzel's method.